7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1



tristic personality traits of a large number of Arabs. A few of these statements seem to be germane to this discussion.

Tannous (1944, p. 526) lists a number of Arab cultural themes two of which, in particular, are constantly reflected in individual personalities. One of these is hospitality, and the other is the predilection for the personal touch in human relationships.

Bonne (1948, p. 255), quoting from Huvelin, characterizes the Syrians as spontaneous, impulsive, versatile, endowed with excellent memories and capacities for assimilation, but somewhat less endowed with initiative and perseverance.

Kohn (1936, p. 75) characterizes the Middle East villager as a "hard worker, cautious and suspicious, but with great natural intelligence." He also remarks on the "personal element" which, he says, coupled with "the tendency of likes and dislikes to outweigh rational and practical considerations, often leads to nepotism and to the granting of personal favors which interfere with the quality of administrative service" (*ibid.*, p. 83). He also notes quickness in comprehension, the gift of oratory, and deftness in the handling of other people (*ibid.*, pp. 83–84).

Thoumin (1936, p. 29) writes: "Neither Christianity nor Islam could ever modify the Syrian mentality, its mysticism (ascetic and voluptuous by turns), its passion for talk, and the pride of the individual in possessing a different faith from that of his neighbor" [author's translation.]

## IN-GROUPS

The matter of in-groups in the culture of Munṣif is one of central importance. A large amount of material has been given on it already, more will be said in Part Two; here the situation will be summarized very briefly.

There are three criteria for the formation of in-groups—three standards, as it were, around which the passions of loyalty and identification cluster. They are kinship, locality, and religion. These three criteria have led to the formation of four units of social structure. Kinship is the basis of the family and the lineage; locality is the primary basis of the village; religion is the primary basis of al-Qurni. To some degree the village is also a religious unit, and al-Qurni is also a local unit from the point of view of all its inhabitants.

Family, lineage, village, and Qurni—for any one individual these four form a series of in-groups of ever increasing inclusiveness from his family outwards. We should ordinarily be inclined to assume that the cohesiveness and solidarity of these units would vary inversely as their size and inclusiveness. In one respect, at least, this generalization does not appear to hold true for Munṣif, for there are strong suggestions that to the average Munṣifi, the village as a whole is more meaningful as a unit than his particular minimal lineage, and this is unquestionably true as far as the maximal lineage is concerned. In this connection, it must be

7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1



remembered that genealogically and conceptually (the villagers' concept), Munşif is a single kinship unit.[1]

This structure of in-groups is traditional, and it appears to have maintained its vitality in the face of great culture change, to which a limited amount of local exogamy seems to be the only major concession. When, however, we turn to the other areas of behavior which are reviewed in this chapter, we find that none of them can be discussed at all without reference to the problems of acculturation.

## MONEY

The villagers' need for, and great concern about, money is very clear indeed. This is entirely understandable since the expense of education and manufactured products, alone, require much of it.

Money as it is known in the Western world is very ancient in the Middle East, in fact it apparently originated there. However, before about seventy-five years ago its use in most villages was limited, since for most needs barter and mutual help in a regime of local self-sufficiency were ordinarily enough to motivate exchange of goods and services.

Money began to come in large quantities into villages like Munşif from emigrants in America. At the same time, Lebanon began to receive foreign manufactured articles which could only be obtained through payment of cash. Today, money is the only means of exchange in the village, and prices are an incessant topic of conversation among the villagers. This is, of course, due in part to the fact that the country has suffered severe inflationary trends during the past ten years, in part, according to Murray, to "a natural speculative proclivity on the part of most of the people" (1947, p. 15).

However, there are some indications that this recent emphasis on money as a thing in itself has set up disturbing conflicts in many people. For example, it is often heard that the Western powers are obviously bent upon buying the friendship of the Arabs, but that true friends cannot be bought. Such an attitude might either be a projection of attitudes and behavior prevalent among the speakers themselves, or it might be an expression of sincere and objective distaste for one of the unpleasant consequences of overemphasis on money. In any case, a conflict in values relating to money is consciously recognized.

## EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

"In Munşif you will find many people who live in poor houses but have much education. This is because we would rather, if we must choose, use our money for a fine education than for a fine house." This was one of the first remarks that was made to the writer about the culture of the village, and, as time went on,

[1] For additional perspectives on the structure of the village see Gulick (1953, pp. 370–71).

Middle East ME1
7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1

# SOME THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

## IN-GROUPS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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WE have seen that Munqif has preserved its integrity as a social unit at the same time that other aspects of its traditional culture have been greatly altered in the process of acculturation. Before we develop a theoretical approach to this rather striking example of persistence, we must put the village in cultural perspective. We must see it not as a single, unique group of people, but as just one example of numberless units of the same general sort which constitute an essential part of Middle East culture.

Of all these units in the Middle East the same basic fact holds true: each one is an in-group. An in-group is a well-defined unit of people which has a very high degree of esprit de corps. This esprit is maintained by the constant operation *within* the unit of behavior and values which can generally be described as altruistic. But toward persons or groups who do not belong to it, any particular in-group (or individual member thereof), entertains essentially negative attitudes which range from reserve to hateful hostility. Murdock (1949, p. 83) thinks that this characteristic out-group behavior is due to the fact that since the frustrations of daily life cannot be relieved by aggressive actions directly within the group without destroying esprit de corps, they are therefore relieved by aggressive actions *outward*, resulting in intergroup antagonisms. The writer believes that this generalization is valid—though it is not very encouraging to anyone who tries to maintain a sanguine view of "human nature."[1]

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One might expect that an in-group might be effective as such *only* if it is small, and if it is the sole focus of loyalty and identification of its members. Perhaps the in-group is *most* effective under such conditions, but, as the Middle East plainly demonstrates, they are not essential to the operation of the in-group principle. As we shall see, the average Middle Easterner belongs to not one, but to a multiplicity of in-groups.

Lest the reader gain the notion that the importance of in-groups in the Middle East is a chimera, a figment of the obsessed mind of a social structuralist, he is invited to peruse the following quotations. First, for historical perspective, it appears likely that the final victory, in the Hellenistic Period, of non-anthropo-

[1] For a lucid discussion of the types of in-group frustrations, and their possible genesis, which have been observed in another Middle East village, see Ammar (1954; especially chap. 6).

Middle East M1
7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1



ME 571 L 571

morphic monotheism among the Jews was in part due to their solidification as an ethnic in-group after the Babylonian exile. (Witness, for example, the statement: "Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign. . ." Nehemiah 13:30). Moving forward in date, we are told that in the Arabian centers at the time of Muhammad,

> The group-bond was stronger than the bond of citizenship, and feuds between group and group often divided a town against itself (Robertson Smith, 1885, p. 2).

And at a later period, we find that the Ottoman Empire

> was composed of a large number of groups, local, tribal, linguistic and religious. On the whole, these groups formed close communities. Each was a "world," sufficient to its members and exacting their ultimate loyalty. The worlds touched but did not mingle with each other; each looked at the rest with suspicion and even hatred. Almost all were stagnant, unchanging and limited. (Hourani, 1947, p. 22.)

ME 571 621 L 571 621

And the following brings us to the present situtiion, of which it emphasizes the regional aspect:

> And so there grew up in the Arab world as we know it: an association of peoples, who are vividly conscious of a network of traditions, interests, feelings and sympathies that unite them, but who live in communities each with its separate social, economic, and political structure, its local loyalties, its attention to particular interests.
>
> But we must not think of these communities as being Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, and so on, to begin with. They were primarily much smaller and more local, for example, Baghdadi and Mosuli, Damascene and Aleppin, Upper Egyptian, Middle Egyptian, Cairene, Deltaic—with a host of other regional communities and often deeply marked subdivisions as well. (Gibb, 1942b, p. 73.)

ME 571 578

The political aspect of the situation is stressed in the following:

> The population of almost all 26 political units (in the Middle East) is splintered into a number of minority and tribal groups many with an intense internal loyalty. It is a region of nation against nation, and within one nation, group against group, and cross-cutting nations cooperating groups with stronger loyalties to themselves than to their nation. The national rivalries are similar to those in the Balkans and Ireland. The group conflicts are similar but usually more intense than those in the United States between old Americans and immigrants, Catholics and Protestants, Gentiles and Jews, labor and management, Negroes and whites. And the groups with loyalty cross-cutting national ties are similar though less effective than world Communists. (Richardson and Batal, 1949, p. 483.)

ME 621 578 L 621 578

Fisher views the situation from an ecological point of view. He points out (1947, p. 419) that there are three basic ecological groups in the Middle East—nomads, villagers, and city dwellers. The nomads detest the settled people but depend upon them for some of their food. The villagers hate the town and city dwellers because they look upon them as extortioners; yet the city is necessary to

Middle East ME
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ME 621 578 L 621 578



the village because it provides manufactured goods, and the village supplies the city with food. Fisher concludes:

> From these three elements, closely integrated by material and cultural ties, has arisen the present complex pattern of society in the Middle East; and it is on this basis that one can postulate a unity for the region as a whole. As a tapestry or painting owes its special character to an intermingling of diverse color masses, so the Middle East can be conceived as a unity based on a number of distinctive yet related ways of life. (*Ibid.*, p. 420.)

A recent paper by Patai (1952) deals with important aspects of this same topic.

ME 186 563 571 L 186 563 571

Coon brings a functional approach to bear on the situation, to which he gives a name, the "mosaic system." His specific view is that the mosaic system is based on an ethnic division of labor:

> . . . the ideal was to emphasize not the uniformity of the citizens of a country as a whole but a uniformity within each special segment, and the greatest possible contrast between segments. The members of each ethnic unit feel the need to identify themselves by some configuration of symbols. If by virtue of their history they possess some racial peculiarity, this they will enhance by special haircuts and the like; in any case they will wear distinctive garments and behave in a distinctive fashion. Working through the bazaar you have no trouble identifying everyone you meet, once you have learned the sets of symbols. These people want to be identified. If you know who they are, you will know what to expect of them and how to deal with them, and human relations will operate smoothly in a crowded space. . . . Obviously the mosaic system is best suited for a civilization in which trades require a maximum of skill, taught from father to son, and a minimum of organizational complexity. (Coon, 1951, pp. 3, 153.)

Coon's interest is primarily in how the mosaic system is made to work in face-to-face contact situations. Such situations, when they involve members of different elements in the mosaic, are generally economic, that is, trade relationships. Economic, or subsistence, needs necessarily override temporarily in any given interaction the divisive pull of intergroup hatred and suspicion. They do, that is, if they are successful and complete transactions. Since most Middle East cities owe their very existence to the fact that they are long-standing trading centers, where members of every element in the mosaic have interacted more or less peacefully, it is clear that group enmities *can* be, and have been for a long time, overridden successfully. But they have not been obliterated; indeed, they maintain their vigor. The fact of the matter seems to be that they can be "forgotten," as it were, only on an individual basis, and temporarily, in the interest of a transitory need, of which successful trade is a prominent example.

David Aberle has come near the point at issue, viewing it as the problem of the "integration of sub-systems with diverse values, within the total social system" (1950, p. 496). In this connection, he points to the coexistence of Catholics,

Middle East
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ME 184 563 671 L 184 563 671

Protestants, and Jews in the United States, and says that toleration depends in part on the special practices of each not being actual abominations in the eyes of the others (*ibid.*, p. 497). In other words, disparate values cannot be *too* disparate, if the groups are to interact at all. The individual's religious role, per se, must not exclude him from full participation in other nonreligious role systems (*ibid.*, p. 498). Applied to the Middle East, we may paraphrase Abegglen in terms of Coser's analysis, by saying that the diverse sect affiliations of Middle Easterners do not prevent them from interacting successfully with each other in the nonreligious role system of the marketplace.

However, the phenomenon of intense in-group cohesions and out-group hostilities remains as one of paramount importance. We must still deal with a system in which a large number of individuals apparently approach their social relationships with an attitude which can be summed up by the following Lebanese village axiom: "I am against my brother; my brother and I are against my cousin; my cousin, my brother, and I are against the stranger" (Tannous, 1943b, p. 332).

ME 571 L 571

Prothro and Melikian, psychologists on the faculty of the American University of Beirut, have recently reported on a social distance test which they administered to one hundred and thirty students in the University. In the test, social distance was put in terms of attitudes toward sect and national groups, primarily. Their general conclusion is that social distances between groups are greater than in the United States, "but they reflect, a general reserve toward out-groups rather than an elaborate classificatory system" (Prothro and Melikian, 1952, pp. 10–11).

But if we are to analyze the in-group system of the Middle East, a classificatory device is precisely what we must have. For, with a multiplicity of loyalties and suspicions impinging upon the emotions of every average individual, there is excellent reason to inquire why (1) anarchy does not prevail in the Middle East, and (2) why the average individual is not torn by irreconcilable conflicts. The answer to the first question is that anarchy very frequently *does* prevail in the Middle East or large sections of it. To answer the second question and to explain why anarchy does not *always* prevail in every part of the Middle East, we must put the mosaic, or in-group, system into a more theoretical frame of reference than we have done so far.

## THE CONCEPT OF SPHERES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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The following theoretical analysis of the complex social structure of the Middle East is based, in part, on the theory of "balanced antagonisms," and the associated theory of "group segmentation," which Evans-Pritchard developed in his study of the Nuer (1940).

Evans-Pritchard describes the overall social structure of the Sudanese Nuer society (a distinct cultural entity whose relations with its immediate neighbors are typically hostile) as an "acephalous kinship state" (1940, p. 181). The society is

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2. Probably more significant, however, is the fact that the lack of preference for lineage endogamy is but one point of evidence for the general tendency in the village toward de-emphasis of the individual minimal lineages as formal institutions. The other points of evidence on this matter are: (a) a minimum of lineage ward's (communal) landholdings; (b) clique-groups cross-cutting lineage lines; (c) rarity, and perhaps absence, of lineage feuds; (d) lack of apparent interest in lineage names; (e) marriage prohibition crosses lineage lines in Sphere 1; (f) emphasis on bilateral connections in Sphere 1.

This de-emphasis of individual minimal lineages does not indicate that there is a weakness in the adherence of the Mountain to lineage (Sphere 2) values. Rather, it is a consequence of the fact that these values have been applied to the Core Group (i.e. the village) as a whole, and that this unit is, for the most part, a relatively stronger focus of identification than individual lineages are.

We have seen that structurally (whether by reason of actual development or of folk-unified conceptualization) the village is a single super-lineage, and that behavior in regard to it conforms to this structural status, even in small details. (1) It is ideally, and still, for the most part, actually, endogamous. (2) When exogamous marriages do occur, outsider husbands are referred to by the term essentially reserved for a man who takes a wife from ego's lineage. (3) Individuals who are uncertain of all the maximal and minimal lineage affiliations are very certain of the over-all common descent. (4) Feuds are not only rare (as they must be within a lineage), but the villagers are proud of the fact. In terms of the concept of spheres, Mazraʿ as a whole can be looked upon as an expanded segment of Sphere 2 (Lineage).

## STABILITY AND CHANGE: CONCLUSION

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During the course of this work, we have seen that acculturation has wrought severely disruptive changes in the village economy and significant changes in "material culture." In addition, it has created disconcerting conflicts in certain values, conflicts which remain unresolved. Yet it has had very little effect on the values and behavior associated with the community itself as an institution and as an in-group.

In seeking an explanation of this phenomenon of cultural persistence we have not chosen simply to dismiss it as an example of the "negative response" (Hallowell, 1945, p. 180) which is frequently encountered in culture contact situations. Rather, starting with the assumption that no particular cultural trait as such necessarily shows a peculiar resistance to change (Ogburn, 1950, p. 136), we have proceeded to the assumption that pre-existing *configurations* of traits may indeed prove to be barriers to change (Herskovits, 1945, p. 154).

We have presented a conceptual scheme of the basic social structure of the Middle East, an elaborate structure of in-groups within in-groups. This is a one-

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figuration of very far-reaching significance. We have found that while for the area as a whole, certain disruptions in these patterns have occurred and more are threatening, they have remained remarkably vigorous in Munjid. Why?

We can now, at last, propose an answer to this question: In-group values and behavior in Munjid have remained fruitful and alive because the village itself represents not just one of the structural spheres of the Middle East, but three of them, interlocking, and mutually supporting. In Munjid, Spheres 2 (Lineage) and 3 (Local Group) are coterminous, and these two are virtually coterminous with Sphere 1 (Sect). Each one of these spheres involves some of the most deep-rooted and cherished values of Arab culture. The integration of three of these creates a cultural configuration which is highly resistant to change.

Such a structure cannot easily be undermined by direct attack. The increasing trend of village emigrants, for example—a violation of a well-established rule—does not seem to be associated with any devaluation of the village as an in-group, and so this behavior *in itself* is not, or has not so far been, a direct threat to the integrity of the village. However, if a new generation developed under urban acculturative influences, in which a large number of individuals were cut off from the effective ties and the values of the village and also prevented from developing new ties and values—if, in other words, a large number of village members developed anomic personalities—then the integrity of the village would very definitely be weakened because the values which now give, and always have given, cohesion to its structure, would have ceased to be effective.

* * * * * * *

Knowledge is gained by asking questions and then seeking the answers to them. We began with a question. We have concluded with an answer; but this is an answer which is satisfied partial in itself, nor is it complete, for it leads to a further question which we cannot answer here, but with which it is fitting that this work be ended.

In Hourani's words (1946, p. 59), how will it be possible for the villagers "by preserving or modifying the old and accepting what is new, once more to form a unified world of thought and life which they can call their own?"

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[Munsif]



of the Wimmers and the Mawali as groups. The Wimmers are transhumants, representing an activity which is of frequent occurrence along the slopes of Mount Lebanon (cf. Thomsen, 1914, pp. 134-35). According to Core Group informants, they, or other Maronites like them, have always come to the village in winter. They live either in vacant houses or in the lower sections of occupied houses. Their presence in the village is primarily in their own interest which is the need for winter pasturage for their sheep and goats. However, the Core Group has everything to gain and nothing to lose by their being in the village. The flocks furnish a convenient extra supply of meat and milk; some of the men hire themselves out for farm labor, they pay rent for their dwellings, and the children attend both of the village schools.

The Mawali are looked upon with some disapproval. The Mawali as a group have been in the village since about 1940, and there was no one comparable to them before that in the village. The men are specialists in preparing charcoal for sale, (mostly outside the village) and for this they cut the scrub oak which is fairly abundant in the village territory. They pay a prearranged sum to the owners of the property on which they cut the wood. Evidently this sum is agreed upon with a view to the Core Group members' getting a fair return relative to the profits of the Mawali, and some bitterness in regard to the way this arrangement worked out was indicated. The women of this group either work in the industries or hire themselves out part time as domestic servants or housekeepers. The children attend the village schools.

It might be tempting to classify these groups as castes. In terms of such traits as ethnic (religious) division of labor, absence of intermarriage, and occasional suggestions of superiority-inferiority judgments they indeed look something like castes. Most emphatically, however, they are not, at least not in the sense in which the term is applied to the characteristic social groups of India. This opinion is founded upon the following considerations: In the first place, in other Lebanese villages representative groups of the same sects live together in entirely different orders of dominance. There is nothing inherent in the nature of any of the sects which makes one necessarily dominant over another. The crucial factor is simply the relative degrees of numerical superiority and local establishment which obtain in the particular area. In other words, as has been suggested above, Mawali is simply one localized example of the operation of Cooley's ethnic division of labor and the present writer's own theory of "spheres." In the second place, as far as was observed, social interaction is in no way colored by group avoidance or any such concept as pollution through social contact. The general tendency in *all* social relationships in the village is equalitarian, conditioned, to be sure, with the various barriers which are consequences of the system of "spheres."

It should be noted that the village is regularly visited by two types of *itinerants*: (1) Tinkers and scissors grinders, who announce their arrival in the village with special cries of the type which contribute greatly to the bedlam of the streets in the cities. They go from house to house and do whatever jobs they are given on the spot. (2) Various types of people all of whom are classed as beggars and of whom it is said, "They do not work, they have no homes, they are thieves and liars." Some are beggars outright; others seek, perhaps discreetly, to find work as servants. Notable among the true beggars are the Nawar (Gypsies). One group of them was observed—three women in distinctive costumes, including circular head-dress, their faces tattooed, marching up the road with

17: Tannous S, G-5 (ca. 1947-48)1949 MEI Lebanon MEI



fessions, although they flourish in urban centers, have either had a direct rural upbringing or are but one generation removed from it.

## II

Nearly all farmers of Lebanon live in villages, not on isolated farmsteads. This is the prevailing pattern of the Middle East and of most the Old World. In some parts of Europe and in most of the United States farmers live in relative isolation, each on his own land. These two different patterns have contributed to marked differences in the way of life among farming folk.

The typical Lebanese farming settlement consists, in the first place, of the village proper. This is a conglomeration of dwellings concentrated in a relatively small area. The houses, ranging in number from about 100 to 500, stand close to one another. Sometimes there is room between them for small gardens or orchards. Usually the center of this nucleated structure is the church or the mosque. In the adjoining open space, the *sahe*, the people assemble to celebrate, exchange news, or hold a market. Dwellings stretch from this center in various directions. Usually, sections of the village are differentiated along kinship-group lines. Another important center is the well, or spring, in the village proper or just outside it. Agricultural land, consisting mainly of orchards, vineyards, and open fields, extends in all directions from the central group of dwellings. During the greater part of the year, the farmers and their animals take a daily trip, going to the fields early in the morning and returning to the village at sunset.

The outstanding feature of this type of close settlement is that it provides the individual with a situation that is highly socializing. People know one another intimately. In many important situations they act as a group, yet leave room for individual initiative. A genuine feeling of neighborliness, or *jiwar*, prevails. The Arabic term is significant, properly meaning "help" or "cooperation." A child growing up in such a milieu must learn from his early days how to rub elbows with people and get along with them. He must develop the art of adjustment not only to his age group but also to his elders and those younger than himself.